



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

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### About this newsletter

Local Government and ABS is a quarterly newsletter created by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) aimed at helping the Local Government Sector use statistics to assist with planning and other community servicing decisions.

The specific aims of this newsletter are to:

- Help you easily find information on the ABS website and explain the structure of the ABS website;
- Provide direct electronic links to statistical series of use to local government. Electronic links are coloured and underlined and can be activated using the mouse button;
- Explain statistical terms to help make sense of more complex data;
- Provide a central contact point where you can provide your views and suggestions as to how the ABS can better assist local government.

This is a free newsletter and we encourage you to forward it to others and post it on your bulletin board. Anyone is welcome to receive Local Government and ABS.

To subscribe:

send an email to [rex.porter@abs.gov.au](mailto:rex.porter@abs.gov.au) with "subscribe Local Government and ABS" in the subject line.

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To find this newsletter on the ABS Website:

- Select **News and Media** from the main menu at the top or bottom of the screen.
- At the next page choose **ABS Newsletters**.
- Then choose the appropriate edition under **Local Government and ABS**.

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### National Regional Profile - A Five Year Time Series

The latest version of the National Regional Profile (NRP) was released on the ABS website on 29 March 2005.

People and organisations who need a snapshot of their local region now have access to more information at the click of a button. Information is available for Local Government Areas, Statistical Local Areas, Statistical Subdivisions, States/Territories and Australia.

The NRP is an easy to use self-help facility that allows users to find their selected region from a map or pick-list and then download a spreadsheet of information for that region. The NRP was developed in response to requests for more accessible information about regions and was first released last year.

The most significant change in the latest NRP release is that it has a five year time series (1999-2003), which will allow users to see changes in economic and social characteristics of their region over time. Other changes include the addition of new data on sources of income, and data on the value of agricultural production.

It is intended that more indicators will be added in the future, to make the profiles even more comprehensive.

The NRP can be accessed free of charge via the 'Regional Statistics' icon on the right hand side of the **ABS home page**.

For further information please contact Treva Richards by phone on (08) 8237 7338 or by email to [treva.richards@abs.gov.au](mailto:treva.richards@abs.gov.au)

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## **Experimental estimates of personal income for small areas**

The ABS has recently released new data at the regional level (including Local Government Areas (LGA) and Statistical Local Areas (SLA)), about the types and total amount of income people receive. The estimates have been compiled for the first time using a combination of aggregated individual income tax data from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) and aggregated income support customer data from the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS).

Further details about the estimates are in a free Information Paper :

**[Experimental Estimates of Personal Income for Small Areas, Taxation and Income Support Data, 1995-96 to 2000-01 \(cat. no. 6524.0\).](#)**

The Information Paper :

- provides some of the results for Local Government Areas (in Appendix 1 on page 32),
- includes an overview of the administrative data sources used,
- outlines how the estimates were compiled, and
- explains some of the data limitations.

The compilation of these data is part of the ABS' program to increase the availability of regional statistics, particularly through the use of administrative data collected by other government agencies. This should assist users of regional statistics, researchers, analysts and service providers to better understand regional populations and economies.

In addition to the data presented in the Information Paper, two sets of tables with data for Statistical Local Areas (SLAs) are available as spreadsheets (**[cat no 6254.0.55.001](#)**). A charge may apply for these spreadsheets

The first set (Table 1), containing data for each of the years 1995-96 to 2000-01, provides a breakdown of total personal income by the following sources:

- wage and salary,
- own unincorporated business,
- investment,
- superannuation and annuity,
- government cash benefit, and

- other income.

The second set of spreadsheet tables (Table 2), containing data for each of the years 1995-96 to 2001-02, provides a further breakdown of government cash benefits by five main payment types:

- age pension,
- disability support pension,
- newstart allowance,
- parenting payment, and
- youth allowance.

As the economic wellbeing of most individuals across Australia is largely determined by the amount of income they receive, these data provide valuable information about relative advantage and disadvantage in regions and indicate the level of financial resources available for the population in a region. The source of income, such as from government cash benefits, also provides information about the contribution of such payments to total income in regions.

For further information please contact Mark Nowosilskyj by phone on (08) 8237 7358 or by email to [mark.now@abs.gov.au](mailto:mark.now@abs.gov.au)

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## **ABS views on the content of Agricultural Census 2005-06**

The ABS has recently released an Information Paper outlining ABS views on content and procedures for the 2005-06 Agricultural Census.

### **Agricultural Census : ABS Views on Content and Procedures 2005-06 (7103.0)**

The ABS conducts an agricultural census every five years, with large sample surveys in intervening years. The Agricultural census is one of the largest statistical collections undertaken by the ABS. The main objective of the Agricultural Census is to provide benchmark information on the agricultural sector for small geographic areas.

The collection has five main roles:

- to provide core production data to derive gross operating surplus and gross income for the farm sector
- to support the determination and monitoring of agriculture policy
- to support the determination and monitoring of natural resource and water policy as it relates to agriculture
- to support decision makers involved in producing, supplying, marketing and trading agricultural commodities; and
- to support the monitoring of economic and social issues affecting rural communities.

The information paper outlines current ABS thinking on the scope and content of the 2005-06 Agricultural Census, as well as a number of other issues associated with this important collection.

For more information please contact Jim Williamson by phone on (02) 6252 5830 or by email to [jim.williamson@abs.gov.au](mailto:jim.williamson@abs.gov.au)

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## **What's happening in Local Government Finance?**

### **Collections**

The ABS' Local Government Statistics Unit (LGSU) recently finalised data for the 2003-04 Local Government Finance Collection. This data will be included in the publication Government Finance Statistics, Australia (Cat No.5512.0), due for release on 15 April 2005. This publication contains consolidated financial statements for the Local Government Sector in each state/territory, together with a dissection of expenses

by purpose. The publication will be available on ABS website. Then use the menus on the left hand side to find publication 5512.0.

More detailed data will also be available for purchase on request after this publication is released.

The ABS would like to take this opportunity to thank councils for their cooperation in providing data for this collection. Information provided is used in making important policy decisions concerning the sector, and it is important that accurate and timely information is returned by councils in building this data set.

Other upcoming events include the March cycle of the Quarterly Local Government Finance collection. The due date for councils to return the completed form will be 13 April, 2005.

## **Visits to Departments of Local Government and Grants Commissions**

Each year, the LGSU endeavours to meet with each of the state/territory Grants Commissions or Departments of Local Government to review the recently completed 2002-03 annual collection, and to commence preparations for the 2004-05 cycle. These meetings are currently being organised for April and May this year. Issues discussed in these meetings will include the timetable for the 2004-05 collection, any changes to the collection instrument and the collection process itself.

## **Other Developments**

Work has also commenced on a project to identify sources of data relating to the field of Local Government statistics. This work will lead into the development of a Local Government Information Development Plan (IDP), an agreement between key stakeholders that defines the suite of information required to support policy in a particular field of statistics. As explained in the previous issue of this newsletter, the aim of developing an IDP is to improve the quality, coverage and use of statistics in the field of Local Government.

## **Contacts**

Director: Sean Thompson [[sean.thompson@abs.gov.au](mailto:sean.thompson@abs.gov.au)] (07) 3222 6257

Assistant Director: Peter Ball [[peter.ball@abs.gov.au](mailto:peter.ball@abs.gov.au)] (07) 3222 6404

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## **Year Book Australia 2005 is available now**



Year Book Australia 2005

The Year Book Australia 2005 is a comprehensive source of information about Australia. Now with CD, the latest issue is presented in one package as a special ABS centenary offer, making it great value for money. Order your copy online or telephone 1300 135 070, and have your credit card details ready.

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## **Links to previous issues of Local Government and ABS**

**Local Government and ABS Issue 8 December 2004**  
**Local Government and ABS Issue 7 September 2004**  
**Local Government and ABS Issue 6 June 2004**  
**Local Government and ABS Issue 5 March 2004**  
**Local Government and ABS Issue 4 December 2003**  
**Local Government and ABS Issue 3 September 2003**  
**Local Government and ABS Issue 2 June 2003**  
**Local Government and ABS Issue 1 March 2003**

## Newsletter contact details

This newsletter is one way to help improve communication between the ABS and the Local Government Sector. New ABS initiatives to assist local government organisations will be announced in this newsletter as they evolve. We would like your views and suggestions about this newsletter so that it remains useful and assists you to understand and use ABS statistics. Please email comments to [rex.porter@abs.gov.au](mailto:rex.porter@abs.gov.au), or by telephone on (08) 8237 7416.

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